

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate our friend and ally, the State of Israel, on the 64th anniversary of her founding.

A week ago, I had the honor of attending the National Days of Remembrance ceremony in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. As I listened to the program, I was reminded again that there was nothing pre-ordained about the rebirth of the State of Israel. When he was President, Dwight Eisenhower said, "Our forces saved the remnants of the Jewish people of Europe for a new life and a new hope in the reborn land of Israel." Even upon its founding 64 years ago Israel's survival was not assured. That is still the case today, but we must commit to a lasting State of Israel, for all that she represents and stands for.

I have seen Israeli families terrorized by rocket attacks, so I understand the daily threat they face. The political movements sweeping the region from Libya to Syria have the potential--if hijacked by extremists--to pose mortal threats to Israel's existence. I am ever mindful of Israel's precarious position, which is why I have voted for over \$35 billion in economic and military assistance for Israel during my time in Congress, and I will continue to support such measures in the future.

Ultimately, the only way to achieve lasting peace and security for the citizens of Israel is to secure a just, permanent, and peaceful settlement between Israelis and Palestinians, and their neighbors. In the past, genuine, measurable progress towards that goal has come when the United States has been most directly engaged in trying to bring the parties together. The Camp David and Oslo accords are examples. I remain convinced that real progress can be made towards peace--but our country must take the lead in bringing the two sides together. Just as our unshakeable commitment to our friendship and partnership with Israel should not be questioned by the PA, neither should the world community be allowed to doubt that our nation understands that resolving this conflict is essential to achieving peace throughout the Middle East.

On Israel's 64th anniversary, my hope remains that the future of Israel and the Middle East is one of peace, cooperation, security, and prosperity. I am pleased to join the Jewish community of New Jersey and all Americans in celebrating Israel's national successes, her great contributions to the international community, and her continued existence as an inspiration not only to Jews, but to all people.